08/02/23 • BIG TECH • BIG FOOD › VIEWS

Vandana Shiva: Bill Gates and Silicon Valley Behind Push for 'Farming Without Farmers, Food Without Farms'

On the latest episode of Russell Brand's "Stay Free," scholar, environmental activist and food sovereignty advocate Vandana Shiva, Ph.D., discussed food fascism, the power of "philanthropy," digital enslavement and how people can free themselves from this system.

By Brenda Baletti, Ph.D.

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"Human beings cannot have a relationship with nature, land and one another, it seems increasingly, without the intercedence of this corporate power," comedian and political commentator Russell Brand told scholar and environmental activist Vandana Shiva, Ph.D., on the latest episode of his "Stay Free" podcast.

Brand asked Shiva, a food sovereignty and environmental activist, to explain how this corporate takeover of nature happened.

Shiva said the privatization of land and resources under colonialism was the first step in transforming nature into "either a mine or a dump."

Today, she said, privatization has become so entrenched that mega-corporation Cargill can own every chicken, chicken production facility, and every input needed to raise chickens, and then dump all of its waste into public rivers.

The situation we face today could not have happened, she said, without the criminalization of farmers — for which she held media organizations like The Guardian responsible because they attack farmers instead of the corporations.

"If the drivers are the corporations," she said, "you have to have the guts to bite the corporations. You don't target the victims. The farmers are victims of this system."

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Who are the real 'food fascists'?

Brand asked Shiva why the global uprising of farmers — from Sri Lanka and India to Germany, England and the Netherlands — against the globalization of agriculture had come to be cast as a

right-wing idea by the press.

Shiva said Mussolini himself defined fascism as "the convergence of economic and political power." "Food fascism," she said, "is the recent control over our food systems by giant corporations and the billionaires."

Under colonialism, the British controlled the land, she said, but they didn't control the food. The advent of agricultural industrialization, the green revolution and globalization made it possible for corporations to take control of food.

The call for "food sovereignty," she said, "came as the call as opposite to the food dictatorship and food fascism."

Now, she said, those people want to complete the separation of people from the land that began with colonialism.

Today, they want "farming without farmers."

Being able to plant a seed, input love, knowledge and sun and produce food, "is the only truly independent production system and it's that freedom they want to attack," Shiva said, because they are threatened by it.

So they discredit farmers by calling them "fascists" and "right wing."

"And anybody who facilitates that is essentially doing the work of these globalists," she said, "they're the fascists."

How 'philanthropy' buys control

Today, people who talk about the disproportionate power and influence that billionaires like Bill Gates have over global agriculture and health are regarded as "conspiracy theorists," Brand said.

He asked Shiva to explain Gates' rise to power in plain language and with facts.

Shiva said people like Gates became wealthy through neoliberal trade liberalization, where trade in information, in the software and other forms of data Gates produced, went completely untaxed.

Then, she said, they used that money "philanthropically" to gain control of other sectors.

By donating massive sums of money to the global seed bank, to the World Health Organization and to media organizations such as The Guardian and the BBC, Gates and other billionaires took control of those institutions.

It even gives them the power to control governments, she said, who have been made desperate for money through indebtedness.

Gates and Silicon Valley, she said, "are very big players in the fake food future of farming without farmers, food without farms." And they get journalists such as The Guardian's George Monbiot to promote it.

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Chasing enslavement

Shiva said this vision is built on "an imagined promise of an imagined future that we are never gonna arrive at. Because when you get there, you'll find it doesn't belong to you. It belongs to them."

The systems that support their vision of the future appear to offer us convenience, but in reality, she said, maintaining them takes all of our time.

Many indigenous people, she said, still have a lot of time to enjoy life "because they're not chasing enslavement through consumption."

Shiva wondered why people would want a "smart home," where, for example, "the fridge will tell you your milk is getting old. How dumb are we getting that we can't open the door of our fridge and know our milk is getting old?"

"All that is surveillance data," she said.

And processing that data takes big servers. "The tiny bits of enslavement we are getting into is [producing] 4% of greenhouse gases, which is more than the aviation sector," she said.

She added:

> "So, not only is it a very foolish kind of slavery, it's a huge ecological footprint on the planet. Yes. And we can't afford it. So we have to learn to walk lightly."

Data is the new oil

Brand said he was alarmed at the increasing pace of "desacralization" where people prioritize materialism over spirituality and lose control over their lives. He asked Shiva how she thought censorship, the inhibition of free speech and the ability of the media to shut down dialogue, fed into this process.

Shiva said it was part of "a system of total control," that makes that control highly profitable.

What's new in this system according to Shoshana Zuboff's "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism" is that today, human beings themselves have been turned into raw material whose data can be extracted.

"That is the capital of today. Big data is the new oil, and then it's used to manipulate us," she said, adding "Any system that allows you the awareness of your real freedom must be censored."

The strange thing, Brand said, is that this system of technological domination was sold to people as a way of empowering them and giving them their freedom.

Technology should be a tool, she said, but it "has been elevated to a god" and those opposed to that transformation are discounted, through Orwellian doublespeak, as "right wing."

But, Shiva said, the last few years have shown there are three things people cannot give up:

> "First, your ability to know and distinguish between truth and untruth. … And not allow post-truth to be projected as truth and the truth speakers to be projected as conspirators.
>
> "The second is our ability to relate to each other without the intervention of a surveillance state and surveillance corporation.
>
> "And third, because food is what makes us, it becomes our blood, ourselves, our brain."

In other words, Brand said:

> "Speak freely. Tell the truth. Communicate freely. Grow your own food. Don't eat things grown in labs. Don't eat bugs. And don't listen to people who want to promote it."

Watch here:

SUGGEST A CORRECTION

Brenda Baletti, Ph.D.
Brenda Baletti Ph.D. is a reporter for The Defender. She wrote and taught about capitalism and politics for 10 years in the writing program at Duke University. She holds a Ph.D. in human geography from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master's from the University of Texas at Austin.

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A **aj54**
14 days ago

God told us to be fruitful and multiply, so the billionaires want to kill off most of us. God also told us to tend the garden, so the billionaires want to end farming, large and small. Are the billionaires

fighting us, or are they really fighting God?

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R **Ricky Ricardo** aj54

13 days ago

They hate God; they worship Satan!

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celtic cross aj54

14 days ago

In their technocratic hubris they think they are gods.

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S **Sharon Salazar** aj54

10 days ago

The dark side expresses through a number of people.

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Debra L

14 days ago

Love this woman!! So much common sense and truth.

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Z **zorba1**

14 days ago edited

I'll go on growing and tending to my gardens, and natural chickens getting their food from the ground and seeds. F the mandates, I did not follow them. The vaccines are EUA and were illegal, I did not take them. I consider all doctors and nurses as quacks, unless proven otherwise.. I do not trust anyone from any branch of government. Our constitution spells out our rights. F__all presidents and f__ congress. F__ the lying US military..

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S **SuziAlkamyst** zorba1

10 days ago

Warmongers all! Be it against people, insects, animal 'pests', weeds or bacteria, they 'war' against life.
What a miserable existence must be theirs, based as it appears to be on FEAR of loss...of

money, power, prestige or whatever else they may fear to loose.

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Gary Brown

14 days ago

March 28, 2023 The Great Food Reset has begun We all lose from the global war on farmers

France is in flames. Israel is erupting. America is facing a second January 6. In the Netherlands, however, the political establishment is reeling from an entirely different type of protest — one that, perhaps more than any other raging today, threatens to destabilise the global order. The victory of the Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB) in the recents provincial elections represents an extraordinary result for an anti-establishment party that was formed just over three years ago. But then again, these are not ordinary times.

https://unherd.com/2023/03/...

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tamarque

14 days ago

Shiva has been trying to 'retire' and go back to writing but she can't with all this work left to do. So happy we still have her. She is brilliant and so clear in her explanations. Hard to see how anyone in the public can't understand what she says.

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kris

14 days ago

Beautiful interview! 🌅

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celtic cross

14 days ago

You are what you eat. Who wants to be something that Billy Gates cooked up?...

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S

SuziAlkamyst

10 days ago

Vandana Shiva is a blessing.

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Julie Bennett

14 days ago

Where are all the comments these days ? Last 5 or so articles have only 2 comments - This is not normal

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BChristine → Julie Bennett

13 days ago

I noticed that too. August is typically a time for vacations before back to school, etc. Sometimes I think we all need a break from the negativity that surrounds us too ...

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L

Larry DeMarco

14 days ago

Why does it seem like Bill Gates is involved in everything "questionable" in our world. I guess that his "philanthropic pretense" gives him a license to kill. And this coupled with the fact that he, along with his cronies and bosses, has established him in a position that is "above the law," makes him a formidable adversary, but not a totally untouchable one. Let's continue to hold his feet to the fire! Thanks for this article.

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irishtap

9 days ago

This is more evidence of the corporate capture of those government agencies tasked with protecting us from such oppressive overreach. The massive corporate farming operation is an obvious threat to public health, yet the politicians and agencies lack any semblance of accountability or ethical oversight. We have got to clean out the corruption we fully understand is

accountability or ethical oversight. We have got to clean out the corruption we fully understand is prevalent within "OUR agencies", to replace this debauchery, preventing us from experiencing a life of good nutrition and best possible health. This is the United States, after all. Vote for RFK Jr.

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K

Kathleen Willey

11 days ago edited

Disappointed that she didn't highlight why she is vegan - the most she said was how big meat companies were dumping their waste into rivers and
"So, not only is it a very foolish kind of slavery, it's a huge ecological footprint on the planet. Yes. And we can't afford it. So we have to learn to walk lightly."
It is a fact that the vegan diet has the lowest impact on our environment compared to any other way of eating. Any true environmentalist is vegan because they understand this. Just sad they don't talk about it probably because people get so defensive about their "traditions" and way of eating. Watch Eating our way to Extinction

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Dean Jackson

14 days ago edited

"Shiva said the privatization of land and resources under colonialism was the first step in transforming nature into "either a mine or a dump.'"

Ignorance is bliss, as they say. Where did this person obtain her education? I bet it was at Oxford, no doubt! Without private property all resources are public, meaning there is no cost to the individual, whereupon resources are overused, leading to depletion of the resource, with resultant poverty. Private property is critical for the conservation of resources, which is why the West is rich. and why those lands that institute communal property are poverty stricken.

Profit is critical to maximizing the allocation of resources to their highest productive needs, otherwise resources are wasted on unproductive projects. A market-rate profit ensures that labor, resources, and capital are being employed towards their greatest productive potential, whereas a government-mandated low profit rate means resources, labor and capital are being stymied from their highest potential rate of productivity by government-mandated price controls on profit. All economic variables have a price, and that includes productivity, the rate of interest determining the productivity of an economy.

The American Plains Indians lived a semi-nomadic existence, where constraints on property were practically non-existent, hence their poverty. This changed when non-Indians swept over the plains, confining the warring tribes to reservations, while the new landowners developed and used the limited resources the land offered to become so productive that this productivity enabled millions more to exist on the plains, and this wealth takes into account the wealth destruction of the

buffalo, the destruction of the buffalo required to pacify Indians onto reservations; the Federal government spent very little on Cavalry regiments to maintain Indians on reservations, hence the destruction of the buffalo.

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irishtap → Dean Jackson

9 days ago

That was a crock of you know what.

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Dean Jackson → irishtap

9 days ago

You might want to actually form a thought with an expanded clarification for that thought, COMRADE.

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